

twelve pages devoted to the 'Key to Families,' which follow each other in arbitrary sequence. Then follows the 'Key to the Species' (pp. 25-130), arranged in systematic order from the Grebes to the Oystercatchers. Besides the numerous cuts of structural parts, as bill, feet, tail, etc., each species is figured, either full length or half length, to show the most characteristic parts, the illustrations occupying far more space than the text. This is limited to brief diagnoses, in which the distinctive features are emphasized by use of special type. In the case of the Ducks, head figures are given of both sexes of each species; and throughout figures are used to the fullest extent to which they could apparently be of use to the student.

With page 131 begins what will be apparently Part II of the work—a formal description of the Water Birds of Eastern North America, giving brief, nontechnical descriptions of each species in its various plumages, with an account of its geographical range, and nest and eggs, followed by a few lines, in larger type, devoted to the life history of the species. Though not so stated, pp. 131-135 are apparently given as a sample of the main text that is to follow.

The illustrations, by Mr. Edward Knobel, are well adapted to their purpose, though not always artistic. The small line drawings of bills and feet, etc., are very expressive, while the larger wash drawings of heads and full-length figures are in general graceful and effective, except where too much reduced in reproduction. The same figures are repeatedly used in different connections, some of the wash drawings, greatly reduced for use in the keys, appearing again on a larger scale in the body of the work.

With the analytical keys, based largely on size, and the prodigality of illustrations throughout the work, it would seem that the difficulty of identifying our Water Birds is reduced to its simplest terms, and that the author's hope that by the aid here furnished "the novice will be able to identify accurately any of our birds" is not too optimistic.—J. A. A.

Knobel's 'Field Key to the Land Birds.'¹—This is another 'field book,' the purpose of which is "to enable any lover of birds, without previous knowledge or study of the subject, to identify readily any of our wild birds." The 'Field Key' consists of nine colored plates, 3¼ by 6 inches in size, on which about 150 species of the land birds of the northeastern United States are grouped *according to size*, the number and figures to a plate averaging about seventeen. The figures are fairly well drawn, and the size is not too small to permit the advantageous use of colors. In the present case, however, we cannot say the color results

¹ Field Key | to the | Land Bird | — | Illustrated | — | By | Edward Knobel
| Boston | Bradlee Whidden | 1899 — 12mo, 3 ll., pp. 1-55, pll. i-ix, colored,
and various text cuts. \$1.75.

are satisfactory. While in a few instances there is some approach to accuracy, and, as a rule, the coloring is an aid to identification, there are many figures in which the coloring is so misleading as to defy an expert to guess what the figures were intended to represent. This is the more to be regretted since the plan of the book is such that the plates are designed to constitute the 'key.' As said, the figures are grouped on the plates according to size, and hence without regard to natural arrangement, while in the text the species are arranged in systematic order, from the Bob-white to the Bluebird, and numbered consecutively. As the same numbers are used on the plates, where their arrangement is heterogeneous, it is an oversight on the part of the author not to cite the plates in the text, and thus save his reader the trouble of hunting through the plates for the desired figure.

Mr. Knobel divides his birds on the basis of size into the following four categories: 1, 'Birds the size of a Crow or larger'; 2, 'Birds the size of a Robin or Jay, etc.'; 3, 'Birds about the size of a House Sparrow'; 4, 'Birds smaller than a House Sparrow'; the third group being further divided into: 'a, bright colored; b, without speckles; c, brown with speckles.' We must thus look on plate V for No. 144 and on plate IX for 145, with no clue in the text to guide us in our search for the figures of our two species of Nuthatch.

The text consists of a short general description of each bird, followed by a varying amount, from two or three lines to half a page, of biographical information, all printed in uniform type, and as a continuous paragraph, with nothing to distinguish typographically the descriptive from the biographical matter.

The plan of the book is good, but the cheapness of its execution will go far to defeat its excellent purpose. If more care and expense had been devoted to the color printing, and a little more taste had been displayed in the production of the text, the book would doubtless have fully accomplished the author's purpose, and have proved a pleasing as well as useful contribution to the list of popular bird books. — J. A. A.

Mrs. Miller's 'The First Book of Birds.'—In the present work¹ we have a book prepared expressly for children by an author especially well-fitted for the task. "This book," says the author, "is intended to interest young people in the ways and habits of birds, and to stimulate them to further study. It has grown out of my experience in talking to schools. From the youngest kindergarten scholar to boys and girls of sixteen and eighteen, I have never failed to find young people intensely

¹ The First Book | of Birds | By Olive Thorne Miller | with eight colored and twelve | plain plates and twenty | figures in the | text | [Monogram] Boston and New York | Houghton, Mifflin and Company | The Riverside Press, Cambridge | 1899—Square 12mo, pp. x + 150, pll. 20 (eight colored), and 20 text figures. \$1.00.